तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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A Vow to See Lord Rama

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

One citizen approached Lord Ramachandra and his brother, Lakshman, and informed them, "While you were absent on your tour for a fortnight or a month, this brahmin has not eaten even a drop of water during your absence." "Why?" "Because he comes here to see you, darshan." His vow was that only after seeing Ramachandra and offering his obeisances would he then go home and take his breakfast. Because he could not see Lord Ramachandra for a fortnight or a month while the Lord was out on political tour, he did not eat even.

At that time there was a statue of Ramachandra which had been worshiped in the family from Maharaja Iksvaku. Maharaja Iksvaku, the son of Manu, happens to be the forefather of the family in which Ramachandra appeared. He was a devotee of Lord Rama, and he was worshiping the statue of Lord Rama. That statue was worshiped by the family, one after another. But when Ramachandra was actually present the Lord kept that statue in the closet of his room. When Ramachandra was informed by Lakshman how that brahmin was so steady and strong in his vow, Ramachandra ordered that the statue be delivered to him, "so that in my absence he can offer respect to the statue." That statue, *arca*, of Ramachandra is still existing in South India. It is being worshiped from that time. ❁

— Lecture on the appearance day of Lord Ramachandra. Hawaii. 27 March 1969.

Sita Rama

The Ideal Husband and Wife

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

A lecture on **Śrīmad Bhāgavatam** *9.10.11*

Lord Rama is *maryādā-puruṣottama*, the topmost example of and enjoyer of Vedic propriety. He never transgresses *veda-maryādā*, Vedic regulation and etiquette. He is ideal in every sphere. He is the ideal husband, ideal father, ideal son, ideal brother, ideal friend, and ideal king. Lord Ramachandra taught both materially and spiritually. He came to establish the ideal and to teach the people in general. In this verse, the words *"strī-saṅgināṁ gatim"* indicate that the Lord Himself showed the condition of a person attached to a woman. Lord Ramachandra showed by his own example that a person who is attached to a woman will suffer. If a lusty person is very attached to women he must definitely suffer. In his purport, Prabhupada has explained both the material side and the spiritual side. Regarding the material side, he has written:

> According to moral instructions, *gṛhe nārīṁ vivarjayet:* when one goes on a tour, one should not bring his wife. Formerly, men used to travel without conveyances. But still, as far as possible, when one leaves home one should not take his wife with him, especially if one is in such a condition as Lord

next column ☞

Ramachandra when banished by the order of His father.

Attachment to women will cause suffering, crying, and hardship. It will definitely put one into trouble. Lord Ramachandra showed that material side. If one takes his wife with him when he leaves home, he will suffer. Srila Prabhupada describes here that there is no question of independence for a woman:

> A further understanding to be derived from this example is that a woman, however powerful she may be in the material world, must be given protection, for as soon as she is unprotected she will be exploited by *rākṣasas* like Ravan.... The conclusion is that a woman should always be protected. According to the Vedic rule, there is no scope for a woman's being independent (*asamakṣam*), for a woman cannot protect herself independently.

Crest Jewel of Wives

As the ideal man, Lord Rama acted as the ideal husband. The demon Maricha came before Sita and Rama in the form of a golden deer. Lord Rama knew that it was an illusory deer. When Sita asked for that deer, Rama could have told her, but he didn't say anything. Rather, he ran behind the deer to catch it. Thus he set the example of an ideal husband who fulfills the demands of his wife. When he came back, Sita had been kidnapped by Ravan and Rama could not find her. Rama cried and cried, "O Sita! O Sita!" In this way — *strī-saṅginām gatim* — the Lord himself showed the situation of a person attached to a woman. If one is attached to a woman he must suffer like that. He must cry. When the wife is kidnapped, one's duty is to rescue her. A fierce battle was fought between Rama and Ravan, and then Rama rescued Sita. He is the ideal husband, *maryādā-puruṣottama*.

One question arises here: Rama's father ordered only Lord Rama to go to the forest. Why did Sita go? As Ramachandra is the ideal husband, similarly, Sita is the ideal wife. She is *satī-śiromaṇi-pati-vratā*, the crest jewel of all devoted chaste wives. She set the example that a devoted wife always stays with her husband and serves him. When Ramachandra received the order from his father to go to the forest, Sita said, "I will go with you." Rama said, "Why will you go? You have not been ordered. You stay here in Ayodhya. You cannot go. In the forest there are many dangers. The forest paths are not nice roads. They are filled with thorns and pebbles that will hurt your delicate feet. You cannot walk barefoot. You cannot live in the forest." Sita said, "Yes, you have said that I should stay in Ayodhya, but where is Ayodhya? Where there is Rama, there is Ayodhya." Sita was very intelligent. A chaste and devoted wife has pure intelligence that comes from the Lord. "Yes, I will stay in Ayodhya. Where there is Rama, there is Ayodhya, and without Rama there is no Ayodhya. So I will stay with you." So she went to the forest with Rama. And the Lord's *līlā* took place there.

Transformation of Love

Generally, those who are attached to a woman suffer. But spiritually, when there are feelings of separation between the Lord and the pleasure potency, the spiritual bliss of the Lord increases. This is the spiritual side of this subject. In his purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada has just hinted, just touched on it. He has quoted Swarup Damodar Goswami saying *"rādhā-kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī-śaktiḥ"*, but he has not explained it. Some explanation is required. It is a very deep and confidential subject. Srila Prabhupada deliberately did not explain it in depth because common people cannot understand it. If someone develops greed, he will inquire about it. Srila Prabhupada is inspiring the reader to develop greed for it. When one makes further advancement on the path of devotion one will naturally inquire about it. This is inquisitiveness, *jijñāsā*.

This topic is explained in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*ādi* 4.59-60, 68-69, 71):

> *rādhikā hayena kṛṣṇera praṇaya-vikāra*
> *svarūpa-śakti——'hlādinī' nāma yāṅhāra*

Srimati Radhika is the transformation of Krishna's love. She is His internal energy called *hlādinī*.

> *hlādinī karāya kṛṣṇe ānandāsvādana*
> *hlādinīra dvārā kare bhaktera poṣaṇa*

That *hlādinī* energy gives Krishna pleasure and nourishes his devotees.

> *hlādinīra sāra 'prema', prema-sāra 'bhāva'*
> *bhāvera parama-kāṣṭhā, nāma——'mahā-bhāva'*

The essence of the *hlādinī* potency is love of God, the essence of love of God is emotion [*bhāva*], and the ultimate development of emotion is *mahābhāva*.

> *mahābhāva-svarūpā śrī-rādhā-ṭhākurāṇī*
> *sarva-guṇa-khani kṛṣṇa-kāntā-śiromaṇi*

Sri Radha Thakurani is the embodiment of *mahābhāva*. She is the repository of all good qualities and the crest jewel among all the lovely consorts of Lord Krishna.

kṛṣṇa-prema-bhāvita yāṅra cittendriya-kāya
kṛṣṇa-nija-śakti rādhā krīḍāra sahāya

Her mind, senses and body are steeped in love for Krishna. She is Krishṇa's own energy, and she helps him in his pastimes.

In the above cited verse, Kaviraj Goswami says, *rādhikā hayena kṛṣṇera praṇaya-vikāra* — Radharani is the transformation of the love of Krishna, *praṇaya-vikāra*. When we speak about the love of Radha and Krishna, then the topic of the gradual development of *prema, rati, sneha, māna,* and *praṇaya* comes. The first rise of *prema* is called *rati*. When it becomes condensed it is called *prema*. When it becomes more condensed it becomes *sneha*. When even more condensed it is called *māna*. When *māna* becomes condensed then it becomes *praṇaya*. *Rati, prema, sneha, māna,* and *praṇaya*. *Praṇaya* is the fifth stage of development.

Manuscript in a Locked Box

In the purport to today's verse, Srila Prabhupada quotes Swarup Damodar Goswami, *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī-śaktiḥ* — "The loving affairs of Sri Radha and Krishna are transcendental manifestations of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency." *Praṇaya-vikṛtir* means a transformation of love.

This subject of *rati* was discussed when Mahaprabhu met Raya Ramananda. That discussion is known as *rāmānanda-saṁvāda* and appears in the eighth chapter of the *madhya-līlā* of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Mahaprabhu asked many questions and Raya Ramananda was answering. In a purport to that conversation, Srila Prabhupada wrote: "Srimati Radharani is the most important of all *gopīs* and her specific loving service is the highest expression of *mādhurya-prema*." [Srila Prabhupada's *In Search of the Ultimate Goal of* Life, first printing, p.62] And in the ninth canto purport under discussion, Srila Prabhupada says, "The *hlādinī* potency of the Lord belonging to the *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, *mādhurya-rasa*, the mellow of conjugal love in the spiritual world..."

Because this topic has come up I am speaking about it. Srila Prabhupada has just hinted about the subject and I am just inspiring you to develop greed for it. Because you are gross materialists you cannot understand it. You will color it in a material way. That is very dangerous. When you make spiritual advancement you will be able to understand. Otherwise not. Prabhupada deliberately didn't discuss the topic here. But he knows it and it is there in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. He wrote all these things, but he kept it hidden. He didn't bring it out. Now it is coming out. It is all mentioned here. This topic is like a manuscript that was kept in a locked box.

There is some danger here that the neophytes will give these topics some material color. Again in his book, *In Search of the Ultimate Goal of Life*, p. 62-63, Srila Prabhupada has written:

Therefore it is better that the neophyte practitioners in the devotional field not try to understand the intimacies of Srimati Radharani's confidential service. However, expecting that submissive and bonafide devotees will understand Srimati Radharani's service in the future, these confidential discussions are described by Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Devotees who have been fortunate enough to rise to the spontaneous service of Godhead, *rāgānugā-bhakti*, and who have developed an attraction for *mādhurya-prema*, may follow in the footsteps of the confidential associates of Srimati Radharani and their assistants called the *mañjarīs*.

Srila Prabhupada continued:

The ecstasy that was felt by Srimati Radharani when she met Uddhava in Vraja in her mournful mood of separation from Sri Krishna is personified in Lord Chaitanya.

Who is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu? Radharani's mournful mood of separation from Sri Krishna is personified in Lord Chaitanya. No one should imitate Lord Chaitanya's transcendental feelings, because it is impossible for a living being to reach that stage. However, at the stage of developed consciousness one may follow in his footsteps. These are the hints given by experienced, self-realized devotees in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami, who in *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is Rupa-manjari, a distinguished cowherd girl.

Fire Covered by Smoke

Ramananda Raya explained a *śloka* from *Padma Purāṇa:* [This verse is from the *Padma Purāṇa* and is included in Srila Rupa Gosvami's

Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta (2.1.45). It also appears as *Cc. ādi* 4.215, *madhya* 8.99, and *madhya* 18.8.]

yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos tasyāḥ kuṇḍaṁ priyaṁ tathā
sarva-gopīṣu saivaikā viṣṇor atyanta-vallabhā

Srimati Radharani is the most beloved cowherd girl of Sri Krishna. Not only Srimati Radharani, but also the lake known as Radha-kunda is as dear to Sri Krishna as Srimati Radharani herself.

The first rise of *prema* is called *rati*. In the *rati* section of *Ujjvala-nilamaṇi* [Chapter 14 verses 45-58], you will find that *rati* has three categories. They are *sādhāraṇī, samañjasā*, and *samarthā*. An example of *sādhāraṇī-rati* is Kubja. Surpanakha in *rāma-līlā* became Kubja in her next birth. Kubja's love is of the *sādhāraṇī-rati* category, and it extends up to the level known as *prema*. After *rati* comes *prema*, then *sneha*, then *māna*, and then *praṇaya*. After *praṇaya* comes *rāga, anurāga, bhāva*, and it goes higher to *mahābhava*. *Sādhāraṇī-rati* is a rare achievement, and is compared to a jewel. Its condition is like fire covered with smoke.

Superior to *sādhāraṇī-rati* is *samañjasā-rati*. The example of *samañjasā-rati* is the wedded wives of Krishna in Dwarka, headed by Rukmini. This is *svakīya-bhāva*. Sita comes under the *svakīya* category. Sita's love belongs to the category of *samañjasā-rati*. *Samañjasā-rati* extends up to the level known as *anurāga* — *rati, prema, sneha, māna, praṇaya, rāga, anurāga*. This love is like a jewel, not an ordinary *maṇi*, gem. It is very rare. *Sādhāranī-rati* is like fire covered with smoke, whereas *samañjasā-rati* is effulgent, *ujjvalitā-bhāva*.

The best and last type of *rati* is *samarthā-rati*. The example is the *gopīs* headed by Srimati Radharani. *Samarthā-rati* is topmost. Its limit is the last limit, *mahābhāva*. This *rati* is compared to a *kaustubha-maṇi*. Kubja's *rati*, *sādhāranī*, is like an ordinary *maṇi*, jewel. The *samañjasā-rati* of the wedded wives of Krishna headed by Rukmini, is like *candrakānta-maṇi*, but the *samarthā-rati* of the *gopīs* is like *kaustubha-maṇi*, and it is very, very, very rare. No one can understand that love by dint of their intelligence, knowledge, merit, scholarship, nor through logic or argument. There is no tinge of material lust in it. ❀

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NOT ATTRACTED BY MERE BEAUTY

Srila Rupa Goswami's

Lalita-mādhava Nāṭakam *5.116*

Being requested by Rukmini to rescue her from a forced marriage with Sisupal, Krishna arrived in the city of Kundina with his friend Garuda. In honor of the upcoming wedding, Rukmini's brother had organized a fire sacrifice for the goddess Durga in her temple and had stationed many guards around it to keep out unwanted persons. Krishna and Garuda disguised themselves as dancers and gained entrance to the temple. When Rukmini arrived, Garuda pointed her out to Krishna, and told him that Rukmini was far more beautiful than even Lakshmi, the Goddess of fortune. Krishna replied:

sakhe bhavatu. kim etena, yad eṣa rūpa-mātreṇa na hāryo hariḥ.

"O my friend, your words are certainly true. But it matters little, since Lord Hari is not enchanted by beauty alone." ❀

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